

Gaining Ground for Wildlife CP38E (CP-4D)

Iowa Job Sheet

CRP: Wildlife Plan

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Des Moines, Iowa

Iowa Conservation Practice 645
April 2017

Description

Gaining Ground for Wildlife is a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative. It is designed to establish native grasses on eligible cropland within 3 miles of existing protected habitats to benefit wetland and grassland wildlife.

Conservation planners should refer to 2-CRP, Iowa Amendments, Exhibit 11 for specifics.

This document will serve as the wildlife plan.

Practice Requirements

- » Habitat blocks/offers must be a minimum of 10 acres if not adjacent to an existing (public or private) wildlife habitat complex.
- » Habitat blocks may be less than 10 acres if the offer is adjacent to an existing grassland/wetland complex of habitat (public or private) and the enrolled field in combination with existing habitat creates a complex of at least 10 acres.
- » Land will be considered adjacent even if it is separated by a fence, water body, natural waterway, gravel road or 2-lane road. Maximum separation distance is an average width of 100 feet.
- » Minimum cover type requirement is a mix of at least 3 native grasses and 1 forb/legume, with a total of at least 5 species (nesting cover).
- » Winter cover and wildlife food plots are optional, but encouraged.
- » Winter cover may be established on 25% of the offer, not to exceed 20 acres.
- » Food plots may be up to 10% of the offer, not to exceed 5 acres.
- » In cases of re-enrolled CRP and enrolled hay land, eradicate perennial plant communities in Year 1, prior to planting. Two herbicide applications are required, one which must be in the fall.
- » Managed harvesting for hay and biomass and routine grazing is eligible, but discouraged on winter cover.



Photo courtesy of Lowell Washburn

- » Refer to Conservation Plan Map for locations of habitat types.
- » Seeding plans are attached.

Winter Cover (not required, recommended)

- » Winter cover may be established on 25% of the offer, not to exceed 20 acres.
- » Winter cover consists of monoculture switchgrass or dense mix of native tall grasses such as indiangrass, big bluestem and canada wildrye. Woody habitat consisting of shrubs and/or conifers is also an important winter cover habitat type that will benefit wildlife.
- » When planning winter cover that will contain woody vegetation in Iowa, geographic location is important to take into account due to climatic conditions. Consider the following:
 - * **Locations north of Interstate 80** should consider orienting woody cover (shrubs and/or conifers) in a linear fashion, ideally on the prevailing wind side (north and west) of the dense grass cover. Ideal plantings consist of 4 rows of shrubs on the prevailing wind

side, followed by 4 rows of conifers. Establish winter cover in a continuous manner to maximize winter survival of wildlife species. Woody cover habitat is encouraged to help non-migratory species like pheasant, gray partridge and cottontail survive harsh winters.

- * **Locations south of Interstate 80** should consider shrub plantings to provide habitat for quail and songbirds. Orient shrub plantings in blocks or clumps (non-linear) at a minimum of 4 rows for each location. Establishing multiple shrub plots throughout the habitat block is beneficial. Recommended shrub planting size and spacing for bobwhite quail is at least 30 x 50 ft., with 3 x 3 spacing (this will take 167 shrubs). At least three 30 x 50 shrub plantings per 40 acres is recommended.

- » If establishing a winter cover area of monoculture switchgrass, plant at a minimum of 4 lbs./acre.
- » Shrubs/conifers should be planted at a minimum of 4 rows.
- » Shrub and conifer plantings will count towards the 25% winter cover component.
- » Plant native Iowa shrubs/conifers that provide high food value and cover refer to approved list in Table A.
- » When possible, position shrub plantings next to a food source and in locations with a south facing aspect.
- » Refer to Conservation Practice Standard 612, Tree and Shrub Establishment when developing shrub planting plans and Conservation Practice 327, Conservation Cover for grass seedings.
- » Mixtures of shrub species are desirable over monocultures.

Nesting Cover

- » Establish nesting cover with the minimum requirement of including a mix of at least 3 native grasses and 1 forb/legume, with a total of at least 5 species.
- » The forb/legume component must be native.
- » Diverse native seedings are recommended (minimum 5 grasses, 10 forb/legumes) to attract invertebrates that will be used as a food source for brood rearing.
- » Short Native grasses are encouraged to be included in the mix.
- » Consider including milkweed (*Asclepias* species)



Native Prairie Planting / Photo courtesy of Iowa DNR

- in the seeding to benefit Monarch butterflies.
- » Firebreak establishment is allowed in the nesting cover. Apply Conservation Practice Standard 394, Firebreak.
- » Refer to Conservation Practice Standard 327, Conservation Cover.

Wildlife Food Plot (not required, recommended)

- » Food plots may be up to 10% of the offer, not to exceed 5 acres.
- » For guidance, refer to the Iowa NRCS Job Sheet "Food Plots for Wildlife."
- » Food plots should be planted adjacent to winter cover.
- » Locate food plots on south facing slopes when possible.
- » Consider geographic location when selecting food plot grains. Due to differing climatic conditions, food plot grains with stiff stems are preferred in northern Iowa.

Mid Contract Management (MCM) (MCM Job Sheet Attached)

- » MCM on nesting and winter habitat acres will follow guidance for CP38E Gaining Ground, per Iowa CRP Mid Contract Management Job Sheet.
- » MCM will not occur on CP12 food plot.
- » When managing a diverse native plant community as the nesting cover, avoid spraying herbicide when applying MCM. Prescribed burning or disking is preferred.

Table A. Shrubs and Conifers

Native Shrubs that Provide High Wildlife Food Value	
American hazelnut (<i>Corylus americana</i>)	
American plum (<i>Prunus americana</i>)	
Arrowwood (<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>)	
Black raspberry (<i>Rubus occidentalis</i>)*	
Chokecherry (<i>Prunus virginiana</i>)	
Elderberry (<i>Sambucus</i> spp.)	
Gray dogwood (<i>Cornus racemosa</i>)	
Redosier dogwood (<i>Cornus sericea</i>)	
Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.)	
False indigo bush (<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>)	
Wild grape (<i>Vitis riparia</i>)*	
Conifers that Provide Dense Cover	
Concolor Fir (<i>Abies concolor</i>)	
Eastern Red Cedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>)	
Norway Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>)	
White/Black Hills Spruce (<i>Picea glauca</i>)	
Eastern White Pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)	

* *Not recommended for shrub plantings for pheasants North of Interstate 80.*



Black Hills Spruce / Aissen Tree Farm, WI



Arrowwood / Photo courtesy of Powell Gardens, KS

Certification of Wildlife Plan Completion:

Signature of Producer

Date

Fields

Acres or Number

CP38E (Establishment of Permanent Native Grass, Permanent Wildlife Habitat Corridors-noneasement, Permanent Wildlife Habitat-noneasement)

CRP Mid Contract Management

Name: _____

See attached aerial photo for areas to be treated.

Field(s): _____

Tract: _____

CP 38E (Establishment of Permanent Native Grass, Permanent Wildlife Habitat Corridors-noneasement, Permanent Wildlife Habitat-noneasement) – For 10-year contracts MCM will be applied in years 4, 5, and 6 of the contract. For contracts over 12 years in length, apply MCM in years 5, 7, and 9 of the contract. **(choose one)** Apply to the vegetative cover but not to areas planted to trees or shrubs unless required by District Forester or NRCS.

	MCM Options	Field #	Acres
	Disk		
	Disk & Interseed		
	Spray		
	Spray & Interseed		
	Burn		
	Burn & Interseed		
	Interseed Only*		

*** See following special interseeding information.**

- According to NRCS FOTG (327) Conservation Cover standard, interseeding requires that existing vegetation be weakened prior to interseeding. For CRP, the stand may be weakened by disking, prescribed fire or chemical application prior to the interseeding operation.
- IF the stand was hayed or grazed, this also meets the criteria that stand be weakened prior to interseeding.
- Time periods for CRP interseeding of introduced forbs and legumes: August 2 to September 30 or March 1 to May 14.
- Time periods for CRP interseeding of native forbs and legumes: April 15 to May 14.

Begin MCM in _____.



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